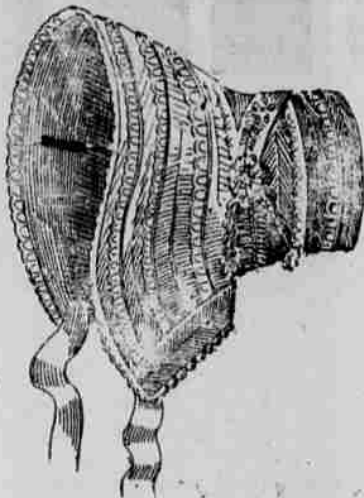


## FIRST YANKEE BONNET.

Made by Miss Betsey Metcalf, of Providence, R. I.

At First Her Work Was Assailed from the Pulpit and by the Press—Preachers Supposed It to Be an Invention of Satan.

Until some years after the revolutionary war all the straw bonnets sold in this country were imported from England. Even those patriotic daughters of the revolution who refused to drink the taxed tea went on buying and wearing the imported bonnets until a young American girl made one for herself, and thus set the fashion of independence for others. It was in 1798 that little Betsey Metcalf, of Providence, R. I., saw an English Dunstable straw bonnet in the window



FIRST AMERICAN STRAW BONNET.

of a milliner's shop in that city. Miss Betsey wished to buy it, but as that was out of the question she determined to make one like it. In her old age she used to relate the many difficulties she encountered in this first attempt at bonnet-making in this country. How the straw was too ripe, and consequently so brittle it would break until her patience was nearly exhausted. With a few directions from the milliner Miss Metcalf finally succeeded in sewing the braid together and getting it into the desired form with the aid of flour-starch to stiffen it and a hot flatiron to press it into shape. A fac-simile of this first American straw bonnet—a drawing of which accompanies this article—is still shown with pride in Providence.

Miss Betsey was much sought after when her success in bonnet-making was made known, and straw braiding became the fad of the day; and a useful fad it was, too, for it soon developed into an industry by which many earned their living.

When we recall the Puritanical notions of the day, it does not seem strange that this straw work was assailed from the pulpit and by the press. Many ministers preached long sermons in which they warned their fair hearers to flee from the power of Satan as manifested in this new fashion of bon-

net making. It was an invention of the evil one to foster pride in their hearts, and thus draw them away from the right path. Some pointed out the danger of famine, as it had now been discovered that, in order to braid it easily, the straw should be cut before the grain was fully ripe. After straw-braiding had continued many years a learned essay was written "On the Manufacture of Straw Bonnets," and after proving that straw bonnets were the root of all evil, ended with some "moral, political, miscellaneous and concluding remarks." But the straw braiding kept right on!

At first Miss Metcalf had a monopoly of the business, orders coming to her from within a radius of fifty miles, and help had to be employed to supply the demand. Her friends thought it immodest to allow a young woman's name to go before congress, so the process was not patented, and straw braiding became general.

The bonnet-makers would take them along with butter, eggs and other farm products to the village store, where they would be exchanged for dry goods and groceries. Soon, however, large establishments became necessary for carrying on the traffic, though much of the work was still done at home. An agent went out at certain intervals to deliver straw to the workers and to collect the bonnets and hats made, which were sold by this establishment to all parts of the country.

It was natural that at first this industry should flourish in the state where it had birth, but soon Massachusetts became a formidable rival, and today more than half the American straw goods are manufactured in the latter state. The bonnets are now sewed by machines run by steam, the machines being of American invention.

Miss Metcalf married Mr. William Baker, and removed with him to Massachusetts, where she lived to a very old age. She lived to see the large results that came from her first small efforts in straw work. She was visited by many distinguished people, who were glad to meet the first maker of American straw bonnets.—Once a Week.

### How to Polish Steel Buckles.

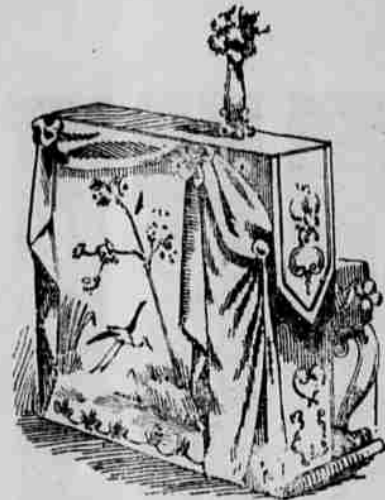
Buckles are to be found upon every part of a woman's toilet, and, of the many chic varieties, those made of steel take the lead. Old-fashioned specimens that look as if they might date back several generations are greatly prized. "How can I furbish them up?" is the query of the fair owner. Boiling oil acts as a cleansing agent. The buckle to be renovated is dropped in oil that has been heated. It is left there for an hour, when the polishing process begins. The best polisher you will find is the ever useful chamois, or, if you prefer them, the inside of an old kid glove or a soft piece of leather will do the work nicely.

TENDER new peas are appetizingly served in cases. These are made of mashed potatoes stiffened with a little flour and baked in fluted cake tins, the center filled with a bit of bread. This is then removed and the peas poured in.

## DRAPERY FOR PIANO.

It Hides the Ugly Wooden Back of the Instrument Completely.

The drapery on the cottage piano is quite a new invention, giving an unusual perspective to the otherwise very



DRAPERY FOR UPRIGHT PIANO.

prosaic looking wooden back. To begin with, a panel of light-colored Japanese gauze or painted satin is nailed straight on the wood; it is then framed by a darker drapery arranged with rosettes at right angles something like a door curtain; should a thin material be chosen for the drapery, it is desirable to arrange it previously on a loose frame, and nail the same on the piano. The ends are covered plain with pieces of colored cloth, handsomely embroidered. Here again, on account of opening the piano, it is better to have the upper and lower parts made separately; the top one can be made to hang down a little and finished off with a point and fringe, like the model given in the accompanying illustration.

## AN INJURIOUS HABIT.

"Salt-Eating" Is the Latest Aberration in the Way of Excess.

A new habit has asserted itself which suggests a curious train of thought as to direction in which human aberrations in the matter of personal habits may eventually tend. It is said, remarks the Chicago Israelite, that the new habit, that of "salt-eating," is not only greatly on the increase, particularly among women of all classes, but that it is in many cases a most serious disease. It begins with a desire for large quantities of salt with the food, and if not checked reaches a stage in which the patient carries salt crystals about with herself wherever she goes, and is continually nibbling at them. The symptoms are a peculiar yellowness and shrinking of the skin, which is followed by the loss of all the hair, even that of the eyelids, until the sufferer resembles one of the wretches who have been condemned to work in quicksilver mines. The desire for salt is said to be universal, not only in human beings but in all vertebrate animals, but the degradation of this taste into a positive disease is entirely new, while the immediate cause remains extremely obscure.